Welcome to University Studies 1301: Social Justice & Activism

INSTRUCTOR’S NAME: DeAnna K. Varela
OFFICE: UGLC 344
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 747.7065
E-MAIL: Use Blackboard

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday or Thursday 12:00-1:00, or by appointment
*The best way to reach me for questions, comments or appointments is via the Blackboard course shell.

Course Description:
The theme for this UNIV 1301 course, Social Justice & Activism will be used to further students’ academic research, writing, critical thinking, and technology skills. Various readings and media will be assigned to analyze key systems of power and oppression within social institutions. Emphasis will be placed on diverse perspectives related to gender, race, class, sexuality, ability, and culture. Some examples will include social justice and activism in relation to human rights, animal rights, and the environment.

Learning Community:
UNIV 1301 is linked in a learning community with RWS 1301. You must remain registered in both classes of this learning community through census day. Readings, assignments and discussions in UNIV 1301 may be linked to those in your English course. Details and due dates will be given in each class.

University 1301 Goals:

• Goal 1. Students will begin to understand their roles, opportunities, and responsibilities that impact their success within the context of the university.
• Goal 2. Students will learn about and practice essential academic skills in order to strengthen performance in the university setting.
• Goal 3. Students will begin to build a network of faculty, staff, and peers in order to create a supportive and positive learning experience/environment.
• Goal 4. Students will begin to assess and better understand their own interests, abilities, and values in order to more efficiently pursue their academic, career, and life goals.
• Goal 5. Students will become involved in UTEP activities and utilize campus resources.
Performance Objectives:

- Develop key research, reading, writing, and critical thinking skills
- Enhance students’ ability to utilize technology in education
- Develop and promote student teamwork
- Advance students’ communication skills
- Engage students in the UTEP and El Paso community

Class Format:
- Lectures and Presentations
- Facilitated Small and Large Group Discussions
- Educational Media Presentations
- Guest Speakers
- Interactive Activities
- Online Activities
- Service-Learning

Required Reading & Materials:


Readings as assigned in class and posted on Blackboard.

Grading and Performance Evaluation:

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*Please note that a “C” is required to satisfy the core curriculum requirement.

ASSIGNMENTS

Specific instructions and due dates on all assignments will be given in class. All assignments must be submitted via Blackboard unless otherwise directed. Please use this syllabus as an overview of the course. I highly recommend that you save electronic and hard copies of all your coursework.

Reading Analysis & Portfolio [RAP]
You are required to complete a brief analysis for EACH separate assigned reading/author and media piece pertaining to the course theme of Social Justice & Activism. The RAPs demonstrate completion and comprehension of the assigned material and must be typed and submitted both via Blackboard AND a hard copy in class. Directions, details, and due dates will be given in class and on Blackboard.

Borders Lessons [BL]
You will be expected to discuss, demonstrate, and connect your understanding of the assigned readings through in-class participation, activities and/or assignments, guest speaker reflections and discussion board posts. Directions, details, and due dates will be given in class and on Blackboard.

Participation [P]
Various participation assignments and activities will be given in class or online. Examples may include a student introduction video, course readings, writing reflections, special event attendance etc. Directions, details, and due dates will be given in class and on Blackboard.

**Final Project [FP]**
Over the course of the semester students will complete a final project that includes: service learning with the Center for Civic Engagement, a research paper and a short documentary film. Directions, details, checkpoints and due dates will be given in class and on Blackboard.

**Extra Credit [EC]**
Extra credit will be offered for the UNIV 1301 End-of-Semester Survey that CIERP administers online during the last 2-3 weeks of classes. Please check your UTEP email for the link to complete this survey at that time. Other extra credit “may” be offered during the semester.

Due Dates: All work must be submitted by the specified date and time. Late postings and/or assignments will not be accepted. Please note that assignments and due dates vary between the UNIV 1301 and RWS 1301 Learning Community. Refer to individual course syllabi and calendars for details.

**RESOURCES**

**Academic Writing**
For help with writing any assignments for this course, please visit the University Writing Center in person located in the UTEP library Room 227, or online at [http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=57766](http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=57766) For further information on the writing centers services and hours please call 915.747.5486

**Research**
UTEP librarians are here to help you so please visit them in person for assistance or online at [http://libraryweb.utep.edu/](http://libraryweb.utep.edu/)

**Technical Support**
Please use the Browser Checker located at the top of the Blackboard Portal to ensure you have all of the right plugins for this and other courses. If you have technical problems with the course, please contact the UTEP Helpdesk at 915.747.5257: M - F: 7AM - 8PM Sat: 9AM - 1PM

You may also visit the ATLAS lab located within the Undergraduate Learning Center (UGLC building) for additional technical assistance.

**Computer Labs**
There are several computer labs on campus that you may use to access the course materials, complete assignments, print readings, directions, and assignments, as well as communicate with your peers and the instructor via the Blackboard course shell. Please call the main number at 747.5000 for information on lab locations and hours. Using the computer labs on campus and the Blackboard course shell allows you to complete and submit all work on time and keep up to date with communication and the course.

**Campus Resources for Student Success**
Field trips, guest speakers & individual visits will be scheduled throughout the semester to connect you to additional campus resources for student success. Attend class daily and check Blackboard for updates.

**POLICIES**

**Course Syllabus & Calendar Change Policy**
Except for changes that substantially affect the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice. Attend class and check Blackboard daily for updates.

**Attendance Policy**
Daily attendance is mandatory. Doctor, work, or other personal appointments should be scheduled around class times and will not be excused. Being absent does not pardon a student from missing assignments or due dates. This syllabus only provides a general description of assignments—specific details and due dates that will enable the student to succeed in this class will always be given verbally in class. Missing instructions or due dates is not an excuse, and may cause the student to not understand what is required; consequently, causing poor grades.
Attendance will be taken daily and you must sign in up front before the start of each class. Not signing in equals an absence. Points will be taken off of your final grade for absences, tardies and/or early leaves as follows:

1. One absence over the course of the semester = no penalty; however late work is not accepted.
2. 5 points off for the second absence [not in attendance or more than 15 minutes late to class equals an absence].
3. 2 points off for each tardy [within 15 minutes of class start time].
4. 2 points off for each early leave [any time before the dismissal of class].
5. If you have more than three unexcused absences total you will be dropped from the course.

Drop Policy
The instructor reserves the right to drop a student for lack of attendance [more than three unexcused absences total], excessive tardies or early leaves, lack of class participation, lack of work turned in, or classroom disruptions such as talking out of turn, using computers, cell phones or other electronics in class. If at any time a student decides to drop the course, it is the student’s responsibility to do so. If you drop before the UTEP drop deadline, you will receive a "W". If you drop yourself or are dropped by the instructor after the deadline, you will receive an "F".

Final Exam Policy
Policy for final exams [From the online Schedule of Classes] Exemption from final examination may not be given. Final examinations are scheduled to be two hours, forty-five minutes in length and take place during the final examination period. It is the policy of the university not to administer a second final examination in the course. It is also university policy that students shall not have more than two final examinations in a single day. In the unlikely event that the examination schedule results in a student having three final examinations on a single day, the faculty member upon the request of the student shall reschedule the second of that student’s three examinations.

Effective Electronic Communication
When communicating electronically, many of the feelings or impressions that are transmitted via body language in face-to-face communications are lost. Consequently, interpreting emotions and innuendos is much more difficult. Only what is written, or drawn, carries the message. Often, excitement can be misinterpreted as anger or insult. It is important that we all keep this in mind as we communicate. Words in print may seem harmless, but they could emotionally injure us when working at a distance. Hence, it is vitally important that we are conscious of how we communicate while working at a distance. For example, avoid the use of caps in your electronic messages, as wording in caps comes across as shouting.

The standard practice ("Netiquette") for participation in networked discussion requires that all participation be focused on the topic at hand, not become personalized, and be substantive in nature. (Translation: you may certainly disagree with others, but you must do so respectfully; you may express strong beliefs or emotions, but you may not get so carried away that you lose all perspective on the course itself.) For more information on Netiquette (the etiquette of Internet communication) please see: www.albion.com/netiquette.

Please observe the following:

1. You are required to check the Blackboard course shell daily for messages, updates and assignments.
2. Respect and courtesy must be provided to fellow classmates and the instructor at all times, in all contexts. No harassment or inappropriate postings will be tolerated.
3. Be professional and careful in what you say about others.
4. When reacting to someone else’s message, address and focus on the ideas, not the person who posted them.
5. Be careful when using sarcasm and humor. Without face-to-face communications your joke may be viewed as criticism.

Scholastic Dishonesty
It is the official policy of the University that all suspected cases or acts of alleged scholastic dishonesty must be referred to the Dean of Students for investigation and appropriate disposition. It is contrary to University policy for a faculty member to assign a disciplinary grade such as an "F" or zero to an assignment, test, examination, or other course work as a sanction for admitted or suspected scholastic dishonesty in lieu of normally charging the student through the Dean of Students. Similarly, students are prohibited from proposing and/or entering into an arrangement with a faculty member to receive a grade of "F" or any reduced grade in lieu of being charged with scholastic dishonesty. Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.
Plagiarism
"Plagiarism" means the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of it in one's own academic work offered for credit, or using work in a paper or assignment for which the student had received credit in another course without direct permission of all involved instructors.

Copyright Notice
Some of the materials in this course are copyrighted. Violation of US copyright law can result in civil damages up to $100,000 for each work copied. Copying of textbooks is not "fair use" under the Copyright Act. The "fair use doctrine" only permits non-commercial copying of part (in general, not more than 10%) of a copyrighted work. Do not bring a copied textbook to this class. Your cooperation is expected.

Center for Accommodations and Support Services Policy [CASS]
If you have or suspect a disability and need an accommodation you should contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148 or at cass@utep.edu or go to Room 106 Union East Building.

Student Conduct
Each student is responsible for notice of and compliance with the provisions of the Regents Rules and Regulations, which are available for inspection electronically at http://www.utsystem.edu/bor/rules/homepage.htm.

Grade Grievance
If you wish to appeal your final grade the process is:
1. Submit your detailed complaint in writing directly to the faculty member who issued the grade.
2. If you are unable to resolve the difference you should then submit your detailed complaint in writing to the chair of the department or faculty member’s administrative supervisor.

For further information visit: http://sa.utep.edu/studentlife/2011/09/02/grade-grievance/

Equity Statement
All persons, regardless of gender, age, class, race, religion, physical disability, sexual orientation, etc., shall have equal opportunity without harassment in this course. This includes inappropriate comments about the above mentioned on line, in person, or in confidence. Any problems with or questions about harassment can be discussed confidentially with your instructor.

Letters of Recommendation
Letters will be written upon request at the discretion of the instructor. The following criteria must be met before a request is made.
1. The student has completed at least one course with Professor Varela and maintained an "A" average.
2. The request is made at least 30 days in advance.
3. The student provides Professor Varela with their resume, statement of purpose, the contact information for who the letter is to be written to including: the program name, the point of contact name, full mailing address, and what exactly the student is applying for.